



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE USE OF THE WORDS PRIEST, SACRIFICE,
AND PROPHET IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

By the late Prof. FREDERIC GARDINER, D.D.,

Middletown, Conn.

The enquiry in regard to the first of these words must necessarily be a double one, since it is well known that *Priest* in English does double duty as a translation of the Greek *hiereus* and as a contraction of the word *Presbyter*, the English form of the Greek *presbuteros*. It is never used in this latter sense in our English Bible, the fuller form having been always preferred by our translators; yet as it is so used without question in some of the older English versions, in the writings of standard English divines, in the prayer book and in ecclesiastical language generally, any examination would be incomplete which did not include both the original words which are commonly expressed by the same term in English.

The word *hiereus* with its derivatives, meaning *chief priest* and *priest's office*, *priesthood*, *to execute the priest's office*, *pertaining to the high priest*, are used probably more than a hundred and fifty times in the New Testament. They are applied to the Levitical priests and their service most commonly, to Melchisedec and his priesthood many times in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and once (Acts 14:13) to the heathen priest of Jupiter; they are also applied to the whole body of Christian people several times (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6), and emphatically and frequently to their head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither the word commonly translated *priest* nor any of its compounds or derivatives are ever applied to the Christian ministry—a fact which occasions no surprise when it is remembered that the primary and essential function of the ancient priesthood was to offer sacrifice, and especially propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the people—in the language of Leviticus, to “make atonement for them.” This duty could never fall to the lot of the Christian minister after the “one oblation once offered” upon Calvary, “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.”

There is, however, another closely related word, *hieros* (= *holy*), which in its derivatives comes to have sometimes almost the same sense as the derivatives from *hiereus*. These derivatives appear as follows when translated: in the amended text of 1 Cor. 10:28, "offered in sacrifice" (*lit.* killed for a holy use); in Rom. 2:22, "to commit sacrilege; in Acts 19:37, "robber of churches;" in Tit. 2:3, applied to woman "as becometh holiness;" a word used three or four times in Heb. ch. 7 for "priesthood," *lit.* "the profession of holiness." There remains but one other instance of the use of any derivative of this word and it is the only one that can occasion any discussion. In Rom. 15:16 St. Paul says, "that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, *ministering*" (*lit.* making a holy service of) "the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." The whole expression is here highly figurative, but in the same sense in which the Gentiles may be considered a sacrifice St. Paul may be considered the priest who offered them to God. Otherwise, as in the case of *hiereus*, neither this word nor any of its derivatives are ever applied to the Christian ministry.

The case is very different with the word *presbuteros*. A derivative is once (1 Tim. 4:14) translated *presbytery* in the authorized version, although Wiclif, Cranmer, and the Rheims version have *priesthood*; but the word itself is always rendered in the authorized English New Testament *elder*, and so also in the versions of Tyndale (1534), of Cranmer (1539), and of Geneva (1557). In the versions of Wiclif (1380) and of Rheims (1582) it is generally *elder* or *ancient* with occasional variations to *senior* (in one case, Acts 20:17, Wiclif has "greatest men of birth"), but in six instances (Acts 14:23; 15:2; 1 Tim. 5:17, 19; Tit. 1:5; Jas. 5:14) both of them have *priests*. The case of Acts 15:2 is here especially significant because while both these versions here use *priests* in verses 4, 6, 22, 23 and ch. 16:4, all referring to the same thing, they retain *elders* or *ancients*, showing that they used *priests* as a contraction for *presbyters*.

The office of presbyter or elder was a familiar one among the Jews, sharply distinguished from the priesthood and representing the people. As such it was transferred to the leaders of the Christian church and is so constantly applied in the New Testament to the Christian ministry that particular

references are unnecessary. It appears that the word was occasionally used in its contracted form of *priest* in the earliest English versions, although in the authorized version, as in some of the earlier translations, it was thought preferable to retain uniformly the less ambiguous word *elder*. The word *priest*, therefore, as a contraction of *presbyter* and in the sense of *elder* must be considered as a legitimate and authorized name of the Christian minister, but never in the sense of *hiereus*.

As the fundamental office of the *priest* was the offering of sacrifice the next point would naturally be the consideration of the use of this word; but as this must occupy some space, it will be better to take up first the word *prophet*, which can be disposed of in a few lines. The word is the same in Greek and in English, and the former with its derivatives is always translated in our version by the corresponding English word and its derivatives. The primary idea of the word is "one who speaks openly before any one" (*Cremer's Lex.*), and in common usage it came to mean "one to whom and through whom God speaks." In this sense both it and its derivatives are commonly used in the New Testament of the prophets under the old dispensation, of Christ himself as the antitype and culmination of them all, and of his servants in the church, the Christian ministers. The corresponding verb is used of Christian teaching about seventeen times, and the title *prophet* is applied to the Christian teacher in Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:10; 1 Cor. 12:28, 29, 32 *bis*, 37; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11, and perhaps six times in the Apocalypse. I find but three instances (Matt. 13:14; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21) in which the derivative word *prophecy* is used of the Old Testament; in the other sixteen it is applied to the teaching of the new dispensation. The other derivatives call for no remark and are seldom used. It appears then, in regard to these three words, *hiereus*, *presbuteros* and *prophetes*, that the first is never, the last two are frequently applied to the Christian minister; that according to New Testament usage he is an elder and a prophet, and also a priest in the sense of elder or presbyter, but not in the sense of *hiereus* or *sacerdos*.

When we pass now to the use of the word *sacrifice* we have a much more difficult task because this word is far more vague and varied in its signification. Even under the old

dispensation there were many different words which come under the same general definition, and these words specifically indicate everything from the distinctly propitiatory offering for sin to the mere "present" to God offered by every grateful heart. In fact the most common word of all, *minchah*, is used alike of the unbloody and the bloody offerings of Cain and Abel, of the unbloody offerings under the law which were not for purposes of atonement, in the prophets as a general word for all kinds of sacrifice, and generally in the historical books for any present or tribute from one nation or person to another. The English word *sacrifice* has a similar breadth and variety of meaning. In our version of the New Testament it is used only and always as the translation of *thusia*; but there are several other words translated "whole burnt offering," "passover," "gift," etc., which involve the same idea. Of these only *prosphora*, always translated *offering*, is of importance in connection with the New Testament idea of sacrifice, since the others are either used conclusively in reference to the Old Testament sacrifices or else are manifestly figurative. We have then to consider only these two with their invariable translations *sacrifice* and *offering*, including with these their corresponding verbs "to sacrifice" and "to offer," with the single derivative from the former, "altar." The task is much simplified by observing that in the Gospels and Acts, as might have been expected, these words are used only in reference to the sacrifices of the old dispensation, to heathen sacrifices, or to the sacrifice of Christ himself. This is true of the verbs throughout the whole New Testament whenever they are used in a sacrificial sense at all. There remains, therefore, to be examined only the usage of *thusia* and its derivative, "altar," and *prosphora* in the Epistles and the Apocalypse.

In Rom. 11:3 the word *altar* occurs, but only in a quotation referring to the altars of the old time. In 12:1 is an exhortation to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," which is so evidently figurative as to call for no other remark than simply to note how easy and natural it was for writers born and bred under the Jewish sacrificial system to clothe their treatment of Christian duty in figures borrowed from the striking ceremonial of that system, familiar alike to themselves and their readers. Rom. 15:16 has

already been referred to as containing the only derivative from *hieros* ever applied to the Christian ministry. St. Paul says of himself, "that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, *ministering* the Gospel of God, that the *offering up* of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Here the apostle represents himself as officiating as a priest of the Gospel in making an acceptable sacrifice of the Gentiles. There can be no question in any mind that the whole expression is simply figurative, and has no bearing upon the literal exercise of priestly (sacerdotal) functions.

In 1 Cor. 9:13 *altar* is used twice, and in 10:18 both *altar* and *sacrifice* occur, but all refer to the old dispensation. In Eph. 5:2 both *offering* and *sacrifice* are used in relation to the work of Christ, as also the "sweet-smelling savor" so constantly and characteristically connected with the ancient sacrifices. In Phil. 2:17 *sacrifice* is used in a very beautiful figure, "if I be offered (= *poured out as a drink offering*) upon the sacrifice and service of your faith;" but no one can consider this as anything else than a figure. In Phil. 4:18 the same word occurs in what has sometimes been claimed to be more. The apostle is speaking of the things sent for his necessities by the hands of Epaphroditus and calls them "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing unto God." Whether this is to be called figurative or not must depend upon the sense attached to the word *sacrifice*. If this be extended to include every act of self-abnegation in the service of God and of His church, then unquestionably it may be considered literal, and in precisely the same sense is every gift to the work of the church in every age. Such a sense is recognized in the word *oblation* in the prayer for the church militant in the communion service of the Episcopal church, and such a sense is well established in English as in every other language. But the point is that sacrifice in this sense is the proper function of every believer; it has nothing to do with *propitiatory* sacrifice and in no way involves sacerdotal functions. It does not connect either Christianity or its ministers with the *priest* or the *sacrifice* in the Levitical sense of those terms as making an atonement for sin.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews these words, as might be expected from its argument, occur frequently. In 5:1; 7:13,

27; 8:3; 9:9, 23, 26; 10:1, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18, 26; 11:4, they are used in relation either to the sacrifices of old or to that of Christ and call for no remark except that 10:26 cuts off the idea of any "sacrifice for sins" beyond that of Christ. In 13:10, 15, 16, however, the words are used in relation to Christians. "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Here the explanation of "the sacrifice of praise" by the figure of "the fruit of our lips" shows the figurative character of the whole, or rather, that comprehensive use of the word sacrifice, already mentioned, which is essentially figurative in character. The word "altar" may possibly seem less clear. Most commentators understand it as a symbol of the whole economy of atonement, in other words, of the whole benefits of Christ's sacrifice; others, insisting upon the literal fact, interpret *altar* of the cross on which Christ was sacrificed for us—which is the only tenable sense if the expression is to be literally interpreted. In either case it cannot refer—at least not directly—to the "Lord's table," although of course this would be one of the instrumentalities by which we are participants of the benefits of Christ's sacrifice.

The word *sacrifice* occurs in only one other place, 1 Pet. 2:5, where all true Christians are spoken of as "built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices." Here the priesthood and its essential function of offering sacrifice are together attributed to the whole body of believers—necessarily in that sense, broad or figurative whichever turn may be preferred,—of which mention has already been made so often.

The word *altar* is used in Jas. 2:21 of that whereon Isaac was offered, and it also occurs eight times in the book of Revelation (6:9; 8:3 *bis*, 5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7), in all cases in glowing imagery of heavenly things taken from the types of the Jewish dispensation. These are all the instances in which any of the words in question are used.

The result of the whole enquiry may then be summed up in a few words as follows: the word *priest* has a double sig-

nification: (1) as a translation of *hiereus*; but this word is never applied to the Christian minister, nor are any of its derivatives. One derivative of a closely related word is so applied only in the highly figurative passage, Rom. 15:16; (2) as a contraction of *presbyter*, and this word is constantly used of the officers of the Christian church. *Prophet* also is applied many times to the Christian teacher. As already said, he is in New Testament usage a prophet and a presbyter, but never a priest in the sacerdotal sense of that word. Sacrifice is used frequently of acts of Christian devotion, sometimes in a plainly figurative sense, sometimes in that more general and broad sense which may be called literal, but which is founded on and derived from the figurative use.

THE POSTEXILIC HISTORY OF ISRAEL. V.

By Professor WILLIS J. BEECHER, D.D.,

Auburn Theol. Seminary, Auburn, N. Y.

THE REFORM UNDER EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

The chronological basis.—The events to be considered under this title extend over about twenty-five years, including the administration of Ezra and the first administration of Nehemiah. They all occurred within the forty-one years that bear the name of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, 464-424 B.C.

The sources of the history.—These are Ezra 7-10; Neh. 1-12:26;* 1 Esdr. chaps. 8-9; Jos. *Ant.* XI:5. To these may be

* Evidently the thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah mentions events that are much later than those of the main body of the book. The question is as to where the transition is made from the earlier events to the later. Dr. Howard Crosby, in the Schaff-Lange Commentary on Nehemiah, is probably a fair representative of current opinion when he places the transition at the close of 13:3, thus placing the dedication of the wall, 12:27-45, in the first administration of Nehemiah. But it seems that the dedication did not take place at the gathering in the seventh month, soon after the wall was completed, for it is not mentioned in the very full account we have of that gathering, Neh. 8-10. It was held at some later time, and was made a special occasion for perfecting certain arrangements for the support of the priests, Levites, and other temple attendants, 12:44, 45. This might have been some months after the completion of the wall; it is quite as likely to have been some years afterward, when experience had proved that the arrangements